

THE ASYLUM

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“Of all the inanimate objects, of all men’s creations, books are the nearest to us, for they contain our very thoughts, our ambitions, our indignations, our illusions, our fidelity to truth, and our persistent leaning towards error. But most of all they resemble us in their precarious hold on life.”

JOSEPH CONRAD
1857-1924

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The Asylum

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President's Message

by Pete Smith

The American Numismatic Association convention provides an opportunity each year for NBS members to gather and discuss numismatic literature. This year the Atlanta convention marked the transition between the outgoing officers and the newly elected board. I want to thank our officers, members and friends who contributed to make it a successful convention.

I also want to thank Wayne Homren for his leadership of the NBS for the past two years. Wayne will continue to maintain the NBS website and produce the electronic newsletter of the NBS, *The E-Sylum*. Our thanks also go to Larry Mitchell and Bill Murray who recently completed their terms on the board.

The incoming and outgoing boards met on Friday before the general membership meeting. Secretary-Treasurer David Sklow submitted a tentative budget based on estimates of revenue from membership and estimated cost for producing the club journal, *The Asylum*. We expect our revenue to meet or exceed expenses.

Currently the membership of NBS is well below its peak of a few years ago and the board feels there is great potential for growth. The board authorized Secretary-Treasurer Sklow to send out renewal notices and a renewal offer to lapsed members.

We added six new members at the convention, mostly through the recruiting efforts of Bill Murray. Those who joined at the convention will be members for the full year of 2002 and will get the fourth issue of our journal in 2001 as a bonus benefit.

The board enthusiastically extended the appointment of Tom Fort as editor of *The Asylum*. We also appointed David Fanning to the position of Editor-in-Chief taking over duties previously covered by Bob Metzger and Wayne Homren.

ANA Librarian Nancy Green joined us for the NBS Literature Symposium on Thursday, August 9. She offered an update on the remodeling at the ANA headquarters in Colorado Springs. She joined the panel of NBS board members John Kraljevich, Bill Murray, P. Scott Rubin, Tom Sheehan and myself as we responded to comments and questions from the audience. Much of the discussion was about emerging technologies and the good and bad features of various media.

The general meeting of the society occurred the next day. Q. David Bowers received the Jack Collins Award for overall contribution to numismatic literature. Bowers was also the featured speaker and the award was presented after he addressed the members and guests at the meeting on numismatic research. He

was very surprised and pleased. Our thanks go to Chip Cutcliff, Activities Chairman for the convention, who loaned a tape recorder so the presentation could be recorded. A transcript may appear in some future issue of *The Asylum*.

Prior to the convention, ANA executive director Ed Rochette contacted the NBS to ask our support in raising money for the Rare Book Room at the ANA headquarters in Colorado Springs. The NBS board pledged \$1,000 toward this remodeling and announced this contribution at the general meeting. The board also agreed to explore other ways that the NBS can assist the ANA with their fund raising efforts in support of our mutual goal of preserving and promoting numismatic literature.

Again this year Brad Karoleff conducted an auction of donated items with thirteen lots bringing \$1,016. Thanks to Q. David Bowers, Alan Luedeking, Bill Murray and Jim Neiswinter who donated lots.

The Numismatic Literary Guild Bash, held on Thursday evening, is always entertaining, as literary celebrities offer amusing commentary on the ANA board, officers of the U.S. Mint and contemporary topics. Former Mint Director Jay Johnson entertained the crowd. In the writing competition, our NBS board member, Joel Orosz, received an NLG award in class three, best article in a non-profit numismatic publication. This award was for his article on "Dr. Lewis Roper, arg-

onaut of the numismatic realm" in the January 2001 issue of *The Numismatist*.

Joel Orosz also received literary awards from the ANA. For his article on "Gilmor and the 1804 dollars" in the June 2000 issue of *The Numismatist*, he received a First Place Heath Literary Award. While his article in the November 2000 issue, "The curious case of the collectors Kline," received a Second Place Heath Literary Award. The Gilmor article also won for Orosz a Second Place Wayte and Olga Raymond Literary Award for distinguished numismatic achievement in the field of United States Numismatics. We are fortunate that Joel is a regular contributor to *The Asylum*.

A report on literature exhibits by John Kraljevich appears later in this issue. Eric Holcomb was recruited to take digital pictures of the first place exhibit in the literature class. He sent these by e-mail to Wayne Homren to include on the NBS website as another example of exhibiting literature.

I told our board that I feel the number one priority for the Numismatic Bibliomania Society is to publish our journal on schedule. I believe the future looks bright for *The Asylum*. For the 2000 publication year, we produced four 32-page issues and a total of 128 pages. With this issue, we increased to 40 pages and a total of 144 pages for the 2001 publication year.

While I am happy with the contributions we are getting, we need more contributions from

writers who have not previously submitted articles. We need to see fresh points of view and topics that have not been previously considered. Your manuscript doesn't need to be perfect. Our editor will work with new writers

to polish your material and get it ready for publication. If you have been thinking about submitting something for publication, do it. Otherwise, in a few months, we may be back to worrying about filling the next issue.

The Results of the Best Asylum Article Readers Poll for Volume XVIII 2000

- #1. Joel J. Orosz, "The printer's devil: Missing masterpieces – the twilight zone of American numismatic literature," (No. 3, Summer), pp. 73-79.
- #2. Carl R. Herkowitz, "Ard W. Browning comes home," (No. 4, Fall) pp. 115-119.
- #3. Wayne Homren, "Checking into the Hotel California: A visit with John Bergman and George Kolbe," (No. 4, Fall), pp. 104-107.

New Members

John Gary Anderson, Milan, IN.
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Philadelphia, PA.
Courtney L. Coffing, Iola, WI.
Jane L. Colvard, Colorado
Springs, CO.
Tom Delorey, Blue Island, IL.
Howard A. Daniel, Deltaville,
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Roger Desouches, London,
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David Harper, Iola, WI.
D. Wayne Johnson, Litchfield,
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A.M. Kagan, Des Moines, IA.

Jonathan Kern, Lexington, KY.
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Marc Melcher, Houston, TX.
Clifford Mishler, Iola, WI.
Steve Pellegrini, Portland, OR.
Mark Rabinowitz, Melbourne,
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Damond Ramsey, Parma, OH.
Chris and Julie Salmon, Paradise
Valley, AZ.
Neil Shaffer, Milwaukee, WI.
Jeffrey M. Shelton, New York,
NY.
Steve Walters, Arlington, VA.
Ute Wartenberg, New York, NY.
Larry Williams, San Angelo, TX.
Charles Windheim, Sacramento,
CA.
Robert Yetman, Houston, TX.

Letters to the Editor

D. Wayne Johnson:

In response to the current *Asylum* article on the different editions of *The Fantastic 1804 Dollar* book, I have the only copy of the first edition that was signed by both authors on the first day of issue. Ken Bressett had 16 copies delivered from the bindery to him at the ANA convention in Detroit. They arrived the morning of August 17th. He signed one copy for me and gave it to me early in the morning.

His inscription reads: "To D. Wayne Johnson – One of 16 copies of a very fantastic book. Ken Bressett August 17, 1962"

I flew from Detroit to Saint Louis (telephoning Eric Newman ahead to meet me at the airport) as I was on my way home to Kansas City from there.

He did and I delivered his first copy to him as a favor to both Ken and Eric. His inscription reads: "To D. Wayne Johnson. This book is proof that in spite of hard long research a group of logical conclusions on one phase of the subject can be completely in error. These horrendous [sic] mistakes will be corrected when the book is issued. This edition should be a classic for error collectors. Eric P Newman, St Louis, Aug 17, 1962."

I added this inscription: "I

received this book from Ken this morning at the American Numismatic Association convention in Detroit. I flew to St. Louis to have Eric sign it before returning home. D. Wayne Johnson, Kansas City Aug. 17, 1962."

Larry Mitchell:

I received today the Summer 2001 issue of *The Asylum*. My congratulations to yourself and everyone who contributed to this issue...well done!

Footnote 3 in Joel's article raises the question "can a single sheet be folded to comprise an 18 page signature?" Perhaps the best way to answer this is to note that "18mo," the commonest of the small formats, usually refers to two signatures (normally 24s and 12s, the inner and outer forme each rendering a signature in 12s and in 6s) derived from a single imposition. Sometimes it also refers to just 6s, and even less commonly to signatures in 9s (the fifth leaf being a singleton; sometimes found in stabbed books of the early 19th century). Figure 61 in Gaskell's *New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oak Knoll, 1995) shows a common imposition. Savage's *Dictionary of the Art of Printing* (London, 1841) shows some of the more unusual impositions.

An American Numismatic Pamphlet Featuring the Execution of a Counterfeiter

by Eric P. Newman

To acquire a newly found genuine example of an early American pamphlet previously classified as unique is unusual. To have its subject matter include a current American social controversy is rare.

In the course of my collecting and researching American coins and paper money the opportunity to obtain numismatic literature has always been fundamental and thus I obtained *A Short Account of the Life of John +++++ alias Owen Syllavan*. The individual featured in this pamphlet was a superb paper money counterfeiter who was hanged in New York City on May 10, 1756. A sketch of his life was printed as his "Dying Speech" given at the place of execution where he refused either to identify his associates or the location of his printing plates.

The black bordered 12 page publication is illustrated with a woodcut of his execution in front of a large crowd with children playing and included his distraught wife as well as his coffin on a horse drawn dray.

The New York Assembly was so frustrated by the failure to locate his counterfeit plates that on July 9, 1756 it passed an additional act creating the death penalty for anyone concealing a counterfeit plate. The reason for

the issue of the pamphlet was obviously to show what happens to a person who repeatedly violated the law and thus to influence others to avoid a similar path.

The original printing of the pamphlet in New York City was prepared in conjunction with the occasion and sold at Henry Deforrester's shop, but no known original remains. The woodcut and probably the frames of the set type were promptly sent to Boston, Massachusetts, where after minor printer's adjustments, reprints were prepared later in 1756 by Green and Russell and offered for sale at the Writing School of Queen Street, Boston.

It so happens that the Boston pamphlet (or New York edition if one ever appears) is the first piece of American numismatic literature containing an illustration. It can be asserted that the official Massachusetts statutes of 1722 and 1737 contain paper money imprints as part of their acts but the statutes may be classified as general law compilations rather than numismatic literature.

Illustrations in European numismatic literature had appeared over two centuries earlier. The penalty for counterfeiting in the Colony of New York

and in some other American colonies was "death without benefit of clergy." This denied the convict the right to have a clergyman present to request God to have mercy on the soul of the departing individual.

Most counterfeiters used counterfeit money to bribe their jailors in order to escape. Passers of counterfeit money when convicted were often placed in stocks and/or whipped in public view. For makers of counterfeit money ear-cropping and face branding with "C" (for counterfeiter) or "R" (probably for repeater) were used along with confinement and execution.

It is of interest that the newly located pamphlet was found sewn together with a group of sermons, indicating that it was an item to be distributed for moral persuasion. The pamphlet with its illustration was prepared in conjunction with an important American colonial event (the hanging) to which everyone was welcome, with the hope of making improvements in the conduct of society.

How times do change! The real name of the notorious counterfeiter who was hanged is not known. His "Dying Speech" indicates that his first name was "John," a name used by an evil spirit which he alleges spoke to him during his youth. The primary alias he selected was "Owen Syllavan." For practical purposes he has been referred to historically as "Owen Sullivan."

At age 11 as an unruly child he was living near Fedard, County Wexford, Ireland and his family

could not control him or cure him of his vices. He had often been confined to his room for substantial periods with only bread and water for sustenance. His English born parents transferred him to a schoolmaster's custody and others also tried to rehabilitate him.

At age 13 he found at Limerick a family who took care of him and he signed an indenture for seven years' work, identifying himself falsely as "Owen Syllavan."

In his sixth year of service he was delivering a letter in Waterford, Ireland when he wandered to the docks and met people who were sailing to America. He found their ship's captain and agreed to four years of service in order to pay for his passage. When he arrived in Boston he asked his master to sell his contract. Captain Gilmore of St. Georges River (a day's sailing east of Boston) purchased the rights to Sullivan and used him for clearing land on his property.

After a little more than two years, Gilmore moved to Boston and Sullivan was transferred to Captain Bradbury to serve as a soldier.

After two years of military life Sullivan enlisted in General Shirley's Regiment of Foot for a Cape Breton, Nova Scotia assignment. This was coordinated by Captain Gordon's Company of Grenadiers where Sullivan enjoyed the discipline and pleased his officers so much that he was appointed "chief Armourer of the Regiment." This

led to his undertaking the numbering and engraving of the Arms of both Shirley's Regiment and Pepperell's Regiment.

He then married and blamed his wife for causing him to be demoted to a common soldier. In his time off as such a soldier he began business as a silversmith doing engraving and moulding.

He cast a Spanish dollar and when a visitor saw it and informed the authorities Sullivan was arrested. He pleaded guilty but was discharged because the dollar was made of good silver. In a subsequent incident he was involved in an argument with a fellow soldier and received a punishment of 50 lashes.

When his regiment finally broke up Sullivan went to Boston and set up as an engraver. His skill must have become well known quickly because two men asked him to prepare a plate for printing a 10 shilling New Hampshire bill of credit (the June 20, 1744 issue) which he did.

He was well compensated and this encouraged him to counterfeit on his own behalf. He engraved some copper plates for Massachusetts Bay bills keeping the denominations below 40 shillings. In anger his wife called him a "Forty Thousand Money-Maker" so loudly that a neighbor who overheard it promptly reported it.

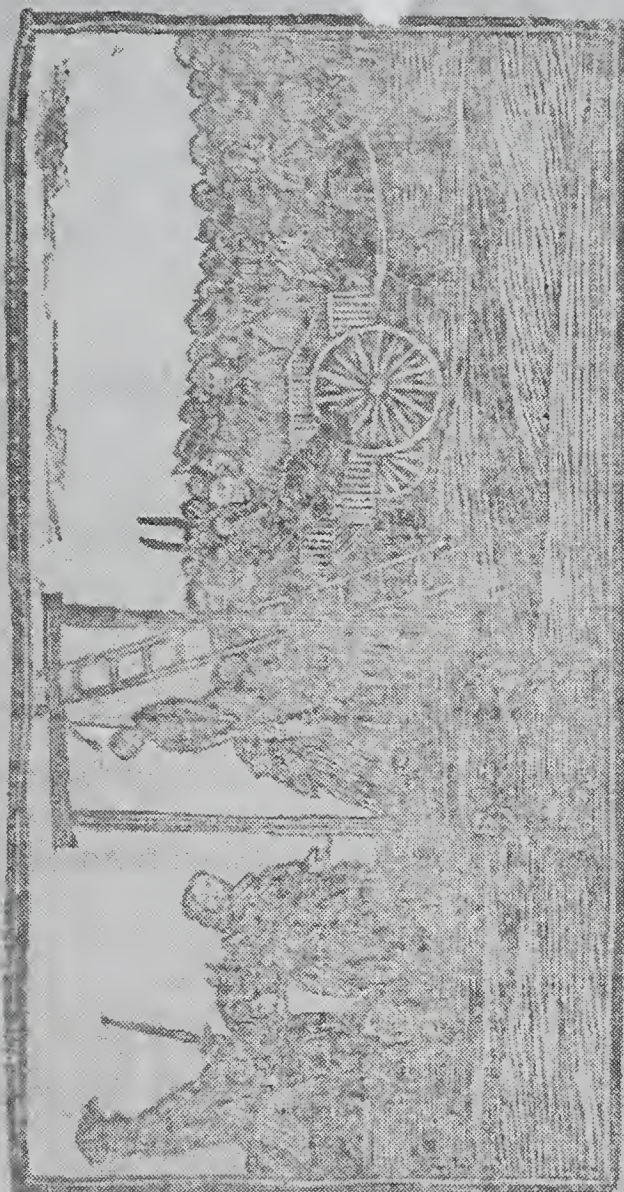
His arrest resulted but he alleged that he should have been discharged because the law did not cover such counterfeiting. Nevertheless he was convicted of

forgery for which he received two hours in the pillory, 20 lashes at the public whipping post and was confined to jail. While in jail he engraved two counterfeit plates, one for the 40 shilling New Hampshire bills (the April 3, 1742 issue) and another Massachusetts Bay bill. Having no rolling press available in jail he printed the bills by hand, signed them and distributed them to the accomplices he assembled. By passing the bills they obtained sufficient genuine money as change to have him released.

Soon a confederate was caught passing a counterfeit New Hampshire bill and Sullivan was named as maker, arrested again but escaped to Providence, Rhode Island. He then was contacted to engage in further counterfeiting and produced £10 bills of Rhode Island (the March 18, 1750/51 issue).

Informed on again by one of his passers he had an ear cropping and face branding in October 1751.

He became accustomed to the disloyalty of his passers by their attempts to save themselves by blaming him. In 1752 he had a widespread coterie of distributors and passers in New England, many of whom were in continual trouble by being caught. He found a secret retreat in Dutchess County, New York near the western Connecticut line and referred to as Dover where Dover Plains and Dover Furnace are now. This location was 120 miles northerly of New York City with easy access to several New



To William Penniman
 Property Bookkeeper
 The

The illustration in the pamphlet *A Short Account of the Life of John +++++ alias Owen Syllavan*.

England colonies. He used James Shiffel or Benjamin Parlon as a new alias. The organized group became known as the Dover Money Club and most members had an ear crop or branding mark.

On June 8, 1753 Sullivan was indicted in New York for making counterfeit Rhode Island bills, but was not located. His agents were very active in Rhode Island and Connecticut as well as New York. Rhode Island offered a £400 reward for his capture.

A competitive counterfeiting group similar to the Dover Money Club was at this time operating in Salem, New York very near the western borderline of Vermont and obtained Sullivan's cooperation and advice in the fall of 1753. In spite of continual arrests of members of many of the distributors and passers of Sullivan's counterfeits the colonies of Connecticut and Rhode Island were flooded with fake bills. In the fall and winter of 1754 Sullivan visited New Hampshire where he found a blacksmith, Benjamin Winn, who could print currency from Sullivan's copper plates.

Sullivan then became more alcoholic and quarrelsome and often referred to his Dover Money Club members as fools. He insisted on fresh chicken or meat every day, irritating his associates and hosts.

The Connecticut and Rhode Island authorities were so frustrated in not finding Sullivan that in January, 1756 the Connecticut Assembly wrote the

New York authorities that Sullivan was living near Dover and that Connecticut would pay any costs covering efforts to find him.

When that inducement became known many individuals undertook to gather information. Part of the time Sullivan had to hide in a cave near Dover with some of his confederates but he soon decided to abandon it because of food and dampness problems. He then had a cavity dug under the fireplace of a friend's house in the Dover area, entering that hideout through a tunnel by lifting up a floorboard under his friend's bed. Nevertheless New York authorities located, arrested and convicted him and on April 29, 1756. They sentenced him to be hanged.

The illustration of the hanging in New York City is realistic. The cart was to be pulled out from under him and then used to carry his body away in the coffin. At first a hangman could not be located, then the gallows were cut down by sympathizers, but his hanging took place on May 10, 1756. He was said to have had 29 accomplices at the time, but further arrests and convictions finally broke up his enormous and longstanding operations.

Owen Sullivan usually avoided passing counterfeits and had others do it, but passing one of his newly made counterfeits of the old New York issue of December 10, 1737 caused his demise. He was drawn by incorrigible repetition of the use of his skill and power over others

and regardless of how much genuine money he accumulated from his associates he never changed his tactics. His "Dying words taken from his own mouth" asked for mercy at the end and reveal only a touch of humility.

The originally known pamphlet (the 1756 Boston reprint) is in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society. It was reproduced in *Early American Reprints* (Microform of early American books and pamphlets), following the indexing of the items in Charles Evans, *American Bibliography*, Vol. 3 (Chicago, 1905) and duplicated by Peter Smith in 1941. Additional copies are in Ralph R. Shaw and Richard H. Shoemaker, *American Bibliography for 1802 and Early American Reprints*, second series.

Much data on Owen Sullivan was researched by Kenneth Scott and published in *Counterfeiting in Colonial New York* (New York, 1953) and in *Counterfeiting in Colonial America* (New York, 1957). The later publication includes the illustration of the hanging of Owen Sullivan following p. 176 as well as an engraving of one counterfeiter in stocks and another being whipped, a scene created by

Nathaniel Hurd of Boston in 1762. Sullivan's counterfeit bills are added to the listing of genuine bills in Eric P. Newman, *The Early Paper Money of America*, 4th edition, (Iola, WI, 1997 and prior editions).

A subsequent episode relating to deterring counterfeiting by frightening the public and emphasizing the death penalty occurred in April 1773, when Col. Philip Schuyler of New York suggested that there be pasted on the back of the genuine bills of the extensively counterfeited New York issue of Feb. 16, 1771 an eye in a cloud, a cart and coffins, three felons on a gallows, a weeping father and mother with several small children, a burning pit, a human figure being forced into it by fiends, and a label with these words 'let the name of a money maker rot.'" (quoted in Scott, *Counterfeiting in Colonial New York*, p. 222). This language indicates that Schuyler had seen the illustration of the hanging of Sullivan.

I wish to thank my son Andrew E. Newman for using imaging which made the illustration clearer than the original. Tom Serfass' assistance is also much appreciated.

Bibliomaniacs Share in ANA Exhibit Hall

By John Kraljevich

As most NBS members likely know, several years ago the NBS was able to create a new exhibit class and award for numismatic literature. This category is now entered at the ANA under Class 22, whereas before it had to compete with things like wooden money and hobo nickels. Also, the literature exhibitors vie for the Aaron Feldman Award for top honors in the category.

This year's convention in Atlanta saw four exhibits entered in Class 22, whose themes spoke to the wide diversity within this (seemingly) narrow class.

As the casual viewer browsed down the exhibit aisle, the first exhibit he or she arrived at was entitled *ANA Membership – The Printed Record*. This fascinating display showcased some very rare (and some common) ANA ephemera: the printed membership lists published by the Association at various times in its history. Included was the first official publication of the ANA, an 1891 membership report, in addition to printed lists from 1908, 1910, 1913, and later ones up to the 1964 leviathan with which most of us are familiar. This exhibit, created by David Sklow, received the blue ribbon for first place, deservedly so as this was a very well-done exhibit.

The next exhibit was placed by Pete Smith and was entitled *Contemporary Illustrations of the*

Second Philadelphia Mint. Focusing on mainstream press like *Harper's Weekly*, this exhibit was a researcher's delight: first-hand images of the Philadelphia Mint from mostly forgotten periodicals. The exhibit began with the December 5, 1829 issue of *The Banner of the Constitution*, that paper's first issue, which discussed the recently undertaken construction on the second Mint. Other inclusions spanned the duration of the Mint's active life, from an 1852 issue of *Gleason's Pictorial* to an 1893 *Harper's Weekly* and others in between. A stereocard of the second mint was a rare treat. Pete's exhibit took third place and creatively wrapped together a rich gathering of non-traditional sources of "numismatic literature."

The succinctly titled *American Banknote Company 1869* included a specimen book used to advertise the company's services and showed four steel engravings. While the subject matter was fascinating, this exhibit did not place. It was put together by souvenir card and engraving specialist John Parker.

The final exhibit on the aisle as the viewer perused the cases was entitled *U.S. Commemorative Coin Advertisements of 1937*. From the Albany in January to the Norfolk in December, this multiple-case display showed the marketing efforts of the several

commemorative halves issued in 1937 as seen in the advertising of *The Numismatist*. Some halves, like the famed Fort Peck half dollar, never came to fruition; others were obviously not the hot sellers the proposing committees expected.

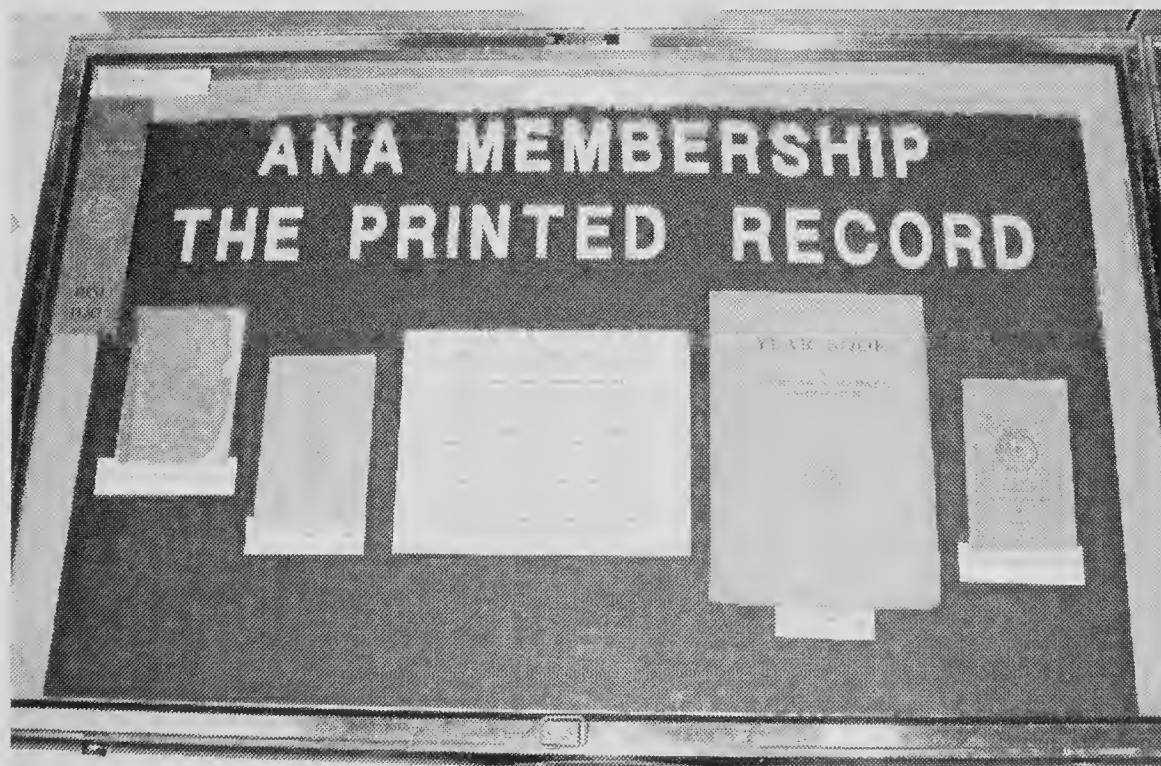
As each issue of *The Numismatist* was shown, the progression of advertisements unfolded and the mind-bending quantity of these ads was explicitly shown. Submitted by David Provost, this one took second place in the category.

While the number of numismatic literature exhibits was small, they showed the breadth of the category and made appealing displays that could interest numismatists of any experience or specialty. This is not to say “sophisticated” bibliophiles would pass them by – far

from it in fact. Few NBS members would nod and claim to know everything included in these exhibits, and most would realize upon viewing them that there are piles of books or ephemera in their own libraries that are not only worth exhibiting, but could make informative and potentially award-winning displays.

The NBS did the leg work to get Class 22 on board for ANA exhibits, and it is gratifying to see that these four exhibitors took advantage of that opportunity. Those who wouldn't consider placing an exhibit won't realize how much fun there is to be had (and how much there is to learn!) until they try it themselves.

Thanks to the NBS members who exhibited; may more follow your lead in the future!



David Sklow's numismatic literature exhibit received the First Place ribbon in Class 22 at the American Numismatic Association Convention in Atlanta.

Sitting on the Shelf

by Karl Moulton

Being a numismatic literature dealer has many challenges and offers many rewards. It is most interesting to interact with fellow collectors and researchers pursuing their particular field of interest. On one particular day it may be someone looking for auction appearances of 1792 Patterns; another day finds me filling an order from Great Britain for catalogues with Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) fine sovereigns. Yet another day someone will be needing some prices realized on certain lots from sales which took place in the 19th century, or ordering a group of specialized sales relating to early American copper, Bust halves, or U.S. gold issues. To me, this is great fun, and I only wish I had more time in order to assist everyone with their research projects.

Maintaining an inventory of over 12,000 plus pieces of numismatic literature requires a large segment of time and energy each day. Fortunately, my wife Jenny helps with many aspects of the business, such as taking phone orders, keeping track of inventory, figuring out postage costs, typing invoices, making copies of prices realized lists, etc. It all keeps her quite busy. I, on the other hand, get to check the catalogues for condition and completeness, try to remember certain sales that were strong in a particular series, who the cataloguer was and when a

particular person's collection was sold (another name for "let's-stump-the-dealer"), what an individual's library is worth, how many plates the 1912 Earle sale has, etc.

All of this is a big challenge, which I thoroughly enjoy. When someone calls and wants to validate or verify a pedigree or auction appearance, that's one of my most enjoyable tasks. As a researcher, historian, collector, and a dedicated bibliophile I not only get to assist others, but learn from them as well. We are usually able to add to each other's knowledge, which helps to maintain our interest and enthusiasm. One of the real benefits of having a large reference library is that it can usually be used to validate or discredit the topic of discussion by checking one or more publications that are available to me.

Remarkable as it may sound, the vast majority of people who are interested in buying coins, currency, tokens, etc. fail to properly educate themselves. Unfortunately, they tend to be like sheep -- their knowledge is often based on what they have overheard at a coin show or what has been written by commercial interests, which may or may not be complete or entirely accurate. In a recent article for the *John Reich Journal*, the publication of the John Reich Collectors Society of which I am a member, I wrote, "Sensation-

alism and untrue statements have no place in numismatics. This includes the commercial arena." There is way too much of this floating around in today's realm. Many thousands of people interested in numismatics, who are willing to pay something over face value for anything regarding money, are already exposing their "craziness" to the world; they don't have to be stupid at the same time.

The fact is, the largest privately held numismatic library in this country was begun primarily to counter misleading claims made by coin dealers and cataloguers. If someone stated a certain coin came from so-and-so's collection, he could then pull the actual sale catalogue and compare the description and plates to make sure it was what it was supposed to be. This only makes perfect sense, especially if you are going to spend large sums of money in this hobby.

I, too, have formed a rather large library of U.S. auction catalogues from the 1850's to present. Naturally, there are numerous other reference books, periodicals, price lists, and historical publications included in my holdings. What really surprises me is that I've had a greater chal-

lenge and more enjoyment from this hobby in building my reference library than I ever had as a coin collector or dealer. There is great satisfaction in knowing that other numismatic scholars and researchers share a similar passion for knowledge and spend many hours reading about things of the past.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact is this: I've collected a good number of truly rare literature items for much less money than was ever spent in chasing "coins-by-the-numbers." But, here's the best part of all: when a particular numismatic item of interest appears (in my case it's early U.S. quarters), I can calmly walk over to one of my many bookcases, take out and read the various publications to research nearly all the information I need to determine a realistic value. It is easy to arrive at a possible purchase price when it is based on facts such as market availability, proper attribution of variety, rarity scales in different grades, condition census, frequency of appearance, pedigrees, number extant, and much, much more. All of this is possible only because the necessary literature needed to become a true numismatist is already sitting on the shelf!

An Old Book Brings Old and New Collectors Together

By William E. Daehn

Owning an old coin brings the collector into closer touch with the past. This is a significant part of the appeal of old coins. Holding an old, perhaps ancient, coin in one's hand brings one's mind into far away times and far away lands. John Pinkerton, in his 1808 book *An Essay on Medals*, put it quite eloquently:

Nothing can be well more amusing than to read history, with contemporary coins before you. It brings the actions in a manner, before your eyes; and we sit, as in a theatre, with the actors before us.

Enhancing this connection with the past is also what draws us to collect numismatic literature. Reading the words of a deceased numismatic author helps us to understand what it was like to collect coins in days gone by, while holding a classic old auction catalog in our hands brings to mind what it must have been like to be seated in that sale room, bidding on classic rarities.

Most collectors of numismatic literature would prefer to own an original edition of a numismatic classic, rather than a more recent reprint. Aside from the matters of binding quality and the quality of any plates, the feeling one gets from reading an original edition differs from the feeling derived from reading a reprint.

When holding and reading an original edition, the collector feels a closer connection to the time and place in which the book was written. In comparison, the reprint feels "too modern," and part of that all-important connection is lost.

An even stronger bond with the "olden days" can be felt when holding a book which bears evidence that it was owned and appreciated by the collectors that preceded us. Just such a book appeared as Lot 962 in Remy Bourne's Public Auction 13, held in conjunction with the Chicago International Coin Fair on April 27-28, 2001.

Pinkerton, John. *An Essay on Medals: or, An Introduction to the Knowledge of Ancient and Modern Coins and Medals; especially those of Greece, Rome and Britain*. Third edition, 1808. Two volumes. 376 and 448 pages.

Here was an opportunity to acquire an interesting original book, published nearly 200 years ago, which provides insights into the state of the hobby around 1800. But the story does not end there.

Living in the Minneapolis area provides me with the good fortune of being close to Remy Bourne's numismatic literature shop. Therefore, I could conveniently inspect the auction lots prior to the sale. It is during this

inspection that I concluded that I must secure this book for my personal library.

The general appearance of the book was enough to make many literature collectors pass it by without another thought. It was not a quality leather-bound book in pristine condition. Quite to the contrary – time had taken its toll and the covers were now badly tattered. In fact, only a slight trace of the original covering material remained, the covers mostly consisting of bare cardboard. Nonetheless, the binding was still intact and strong, although slightly repaired. The spines were still covered and the spine labels were faint, but intact.

The interior of the book was in fine condition, although it was heavily marked-up by previous owners. Wait! Previous owners? Who were they? When did they own the book? Now here were some tangible connections to the "olden days" of collecting.

The inside front covers of both volumes had the monogram "TB" stamped in ink. The meaning of the monogram didn't remain a mystery for long. At the top of the half-title page was the signature of a numismatist whose name I recognized...

*Thos. Burgon -
Smyrna. 1813.*

Thos. Burgon – Smyrna, 1813.

Numerous handwritten notes appear in ink throughout both

volumes. The shade of the ink, which matches that of Burgon's signature, suggests that Burgon wrote the notes.

Another note, written in a different ink, appears on the flyleaf:

Bayan Taylor, Esq., from his friend, Oct: 1866— (unreadable) Pinkerton.

Other handwritten notes in pencil appear throughout the volumes. So here was a well-respected classic book on coin collecting bearing evidence of heavy use by at least two collectors who really studied this book and expanded it with their own notes and references. Already, I felt closer to the numismatists of the past. And as it turned out, this particular book had quite an illustrious past.

Being the author of a bibliography of ancient Greek numismatics I immediately recognized Thomas Burgon as the author of several essays on ancient Greek coinage published in the first half of the nineteenth century, and his autograph alone was enough to make me want this book. But several questions immediately came to mind. What was Burgon, an Englishman, doing in Smyrna, Turkey, in 1813? Who was Bayan Taylor? Who was the "Pinkerton" who signed the book as a gift to Taylor in 1866? What relationship, if any, did this Pinkerton bear to the author? My curiosity was piqued, and my bid sheet was sent to Remy!

Luckily, the condition of the book was enough to keep other bidders at bay, and I was able to acquire the book for a modest

price. And a bit of research turned up enough information to answer some of my questions.

But first things first. What is known about the book's author, John Pinkerton? As it turns out, Pinkerton not only had an interest in numismatics, but he was also an avid collector of books.

John Pinkerton was born at Edinburgh, Scotland, on February 13, 1758. Pinkerton's interest in coins began as a child, when a lady, who had received an ancient Roman coin in circulation as a farthing, gave the coin to him. His attempts to learn about the coin drew his attention to the inadequacies of the available books on the subject. Upon the death of his father in 1780, John visited London, "principally with the view of procuring copies of rare books, which he could not obtain in Edinburgh."¹ The vast number and variety of the books available for purchase in the city caused him to make London his residence.²

His intense curiosity developed into a penchant for writing, and in 1781 he published a volume of poetry. His interest in coinage continued, and he began to compile his own book, *An Essay on Medals*, which was published in London by James Dodsley in 1784.

Pinkerton's book makes fasci-

nating reading. More than a mere handbook to aid in the understanding of coinage, it includes comments on the history and state of the numismatic hobby in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Pinkerton begins with a review of the literature related to ancient numismatics starting in 1548. He is not shy about criticizing the works of earlier authors. He then discusses the knowledge obtainable from the study of the coins of all ages, and he continues with a detailed review of Greek, Roman and English coinage.

Pinkerton's book proved popular, and a second edition appeared in 1789, this time published by J. Edwards and J. Johnson. The third edition, significantly expanded, was published by Cadell and Davies and appeared in 1808.³ Pinkerton wrote many more books on a variety of subjects, including another numismatic book – *The Medallic History of England*, published in 1790. Pinkerton left England and moved to Paris in 1802 where he continued to write, authoring an important series of illustrated books on travel and geography. He died in the French capital on March 10, 1826.

It was the third edition of Pinkerton's *An Essay on Medals*

¹ From a Pinkerton genealogy website, found at < http://freepages.genealogy.rootweb.com/~pinkerton/famous_john_pinkerton.htm. > Unless otherwise noted, most information on Pinkerton was taken from this website.

² < <http://uiarchive.uiuc.edu/mirrors/ftp/ibiblio.unc.edu/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/etext01/ausvy10.txt> >

³ W.E. Daehn, *Ancient Greek Numismatics: A Guide to Reading and Research* (Cold Spring, 2001), p. 11 no. 103.

that I acquired in Remy's auction. After its publication in 1808, the book found its way into the hands of Thomas Burgon, who imprinted the book with his monogram, and signed the book while residing in Smyrna, Turkey, in 1813. So who was this Thomas Burgon?

Thomas Burgon was born in 1787, and worked as a merchant in Turkey. He was said to be "a successful London merchant connected with the commerce of the city of London, a collector, and connoisseur of ancient art."⁴ He married Catherine Marguerite de Cramer, the daughter of Chevalier Ambrose H. de Cramer, "sometime Austrian consul at Smyrna."⁵ Interestingly, the Burgons had several children, one of whom (John William Burgon) was born in Smyrna in 1813, the place and year in which Burgon signed this book.

Burgon later returned to London, and became one of the founding members of the Royal

Numismatic Society. The earliest minutes of the Society record a meeting on December 22, 1836 during which the Society was formed and during which Burgon was named as a Member of Council.⁶ He was soon also elected to the office of Vice President.

Burgon wrote a paper, which appeared in the first volume of the Society's publication *The Numismatic Journal*.⁷ He also wrote three papers which appeared in *The Numismatic Chronicle* a couple of years later.⁸

Burgon's service to the field of numismatics was of such significance that this volume of *The Numismatic Chronicle* began with the following dedication:

To Thomas Burgon, Esq. One of the vice-presidents of the numismatic society, Etc., Etc., Etc., whose knowledge of greek coins is displayed in his scientifically formed, and choice collection; and whose zeal for the advancement of numismatic studies is evinced by his readiness, on all occasions, to impart the informa-

⁴ From < <http://www.compapp.dcu.ie/~humphrys/FamTree/Maltass/burgon.html> >, where Burgon's date of death is incorrectly given as 1838 (see note 5 below for the likely source of this error).

⁵ From a record of memorial inscriptions at Balliol College, Oxford, found at < <http://www.balliol.ox.ac.uk/history/memorial.htm> >. Burgon's date of death was taken from an inscribed stone tablet near his burial vault. The website mentions that "the tablets are eroded and difficult to read," thus explaining the erroneous date of death, given as 1838. He died in 1858.

⁶ R.A.G. Carson, *A History of the Royal Numismatic Society 1836-1986* (London, 1986), pp. 2-6.

⁷ T. Burgon, "An inquiry into the motives which influenced the ancients in their choice of the various representations which we find stamped on their money," *The Numismatic Journal* 1 (1837), pp. 97-131.

⁸ T. Burgon, "On a mode of ascertaining the place to which ancient British coins belong," *Numismatic Chronicle* 1 (1839), pp. 36-53; *idem*, "Observations on a coin of Cleopatra and M. Antony," *Numismatic Chronicle* 1 (1839), pp. 198-201; *idem*, "On Coins of Lebadeia and Zacynthus," *Numismatic Chronicle* 1 (1839), pp. 248-52.

tion he has acquired during a long and familiar acquaintance with those remarkable objects of antiquity, this the first volume of the numismatic chronicle, is respectfully and gratefully dedicated.

By 1841, Burgon was employed in the coin department of the British Museum.⁹ He also continued his writing, authoring numismatic essays.

Being a respected numismatist, Burgon was asked to assist in the cataloging of an important collection, as revealed by an interesting note which appears under lot 308 in George Frederick Kolbe's Auction Sale 84 (June 16, 2001). This auction catalogue, by Sotheby and Co., is the *Catalogue of the Entire Pem-broke Collection of Greek, Roman, English, Scotch, Irish, and Foreign Medieval Coins and Medals* (London, July 31-August 19, 1848). The son of the collector originally published the collection in 1746. But this particular catalogue includes some notes on the flyleaf stating "this Sale catalogue, for the first time, supplies a description of the coins, by Thos. Burgon."

Burgon's last published writing (as far as I know) appeared in 1858.¹¹ At the end of this essay,

he signed "Thomas Burgon, Medal Room, British Museum, 22nd November, 1855."

Burgon died on August 28, 1858 at the age of 71. He and his wife are buried in Holywell Manor Garden, Balliol College, Oxford.

As indicated by the inscription found inside the book, at some point, perhaps after Burgon's death, the book found its way into the collection of someone named Pinkerton (the first name is unreadable). This person may have been a relative of the John Pinkerton who wrote the work, but there is no way to be sure. In October 1866, Pinkerton gave the book to a friend named Bayan Taylor. I have not been able to learn anything about this person.

Now begins a period during which the ownership of the book cannot be traced. At some point, the book made its journey to America and was eventually acquired by another prominent numismatist, J. Henri Ripstra, thus adding another chapter to the book's history.

Ripstra was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1881.¹² He became a tool and die maker as

⁹ An entry in Sidney Lee, *Dictionary of National Biography: Index and Epitome*, found at < http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi_bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:2000.01.0013:id%3Dart.4392 >.

¹⁰ T. Burgon, "On the coins of Zancle; and on a very remarkable variation in the types of a coin of that city, in the British Museum," *Numismatic Chronicle* 3 (1841), pp. 40-8; *Idem*, "On two newly discovered silver tetradrachms of Amyntas, king of Galatia: with some remarks on the diminution in weight of the Attic drachma," *Numismatic Chronicle* 8 (1846), pp. 69-96.

¹¹ T. Burgon, "On certain rare Greek coins recently acquired by the British Museum," *Numismatic Chronicle* 19 (1858), pp. 229-36.

¹² Most of the information on Ripstra is from either P. Smith, *American*

well as an artist and die engraver, and was a prominent member of the numismatic community in Chicago. In fact, Ripstra was charter member No. 9 of the Chicago Coin Club, and served the club as president during the period 1933 to 1936. He also designed the club emblem which was used until 1939. Ripstra was also the curator of numismatics and philatelics for the Chicago Historical Society.

He joined the American Numismatic Association in 1907, and went on to serve as president of the association from 1937 to 1939. Ripstra also played a role in the formation of the Central States Numismatic Society when he served as Honorary Chairman at its first conference, hosted by the Chicago Coin Club, in 1939. He received the Chicago Coin Club's Medal of Merit in 1955. During his years of collecting, Ripstra formed an extensive and important numismatic library, which included the copy of Pinkerton's *Essay on Medals* which is the subject of this article.

At age 77, Ripstra decided it was time to part with his numismatic library. The library was acquired intact in 1958 by Donald G. Tritt.¹³ Ripstra died three years later. In 1978, he was inducted to the ANA's Numismatic Hall of Fame.

As a member of the Chicago Coin Club in the 1950's, Donald Tritt became acquainted with Ripstra and his fine library. Tritt later recounted, "I was honored to be chosen as the next steward of such a fine gathering of books."¹⁴

Tritt is a collector and researcher of struck wood exnumia.¹⁵ Tritt began collecting coins as a boy in the 1940s. He received his PhD in Psychology from the University of Chicago, and was a member of the faculty of Denison University in Granville, Ohio. Not only was Tritt an avid collector of numismatic literature, but he wrote at least one numismatic article which was published in 1959.¹⁶

In 2001, Tritt consigned his library, including the Pinkerton book, to Remy Bourne for auction. After the sale, the book

Numismatic Biographies (Rocky River, 1992), p.197 or C. F. Wolfe and J. Sochon, "History of Chicago Coin Club," in *Perspectives in Numismatics*, ed. S. B. Needleman (Chicago, 1986), pp. 327-64.

¹³ In personal correspondence with this author, Donald Tritt confirmed that the Pinkerton book which he consigned to Remy Bourne's sale was, in fact, part of the Ripstra library which he purchased in 1958.

¹⁴ From Tritt's biography in Remy Bourne, Public Auction 13 (April 27-28, 2001).

¹⁵ From personal correspondence. Tritt has been researching the field of struck wood exnumia for about twenty years, and hopes to write an article on this topic in the near future. Numismatists interested in this topic can correspond with Tritt by writing to tritt@denison.edu.

¹⁶ D.G. Tritt, "Magnification systems for coin study," *The Numismatist* 72 (1959), pp. 131-134.

came to rest in my library in April 2001. So the book's traceable record of owners since its publication in 1808 can be summarized as follows:

- Thomas Burgon, 1813.
- Someone with the surname Pinkerton, sometime between 1813 and 1866.
- Bayan Taylor, October 1866 to an unknown date.
- J. Henri Ripstra, acquired sometime after 1881; owned until 1958.
- Donald G. Tritt, 1958-April 2001.
- William E. Daehn, April 2001 to present.

Obviously, these old books that we collect have stories to tell. If you'll forgive the liberties

I've taken with Pinkerton's eloquence.

Nothing can be well more amusing than to examine coins, with old books before you. It brings the collectors in a manner, before your eyes; and we sit, as in a club meeting, with the old-time collectors beside us.

I've now written my name, city, and a date inside the book. While some literature collectors will cringe at the idea of writing inside a book, this book is already heavily marked, so a bit more writing won't hurt.

Someday another numismatic literature collector will ask, "Who was William E. Daehn, and what was he doing in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, in 2001?"

The Origin of Coin World Annual Book Edition and Rememberances of Frank J. Katen

By D. Wayne Johnson

The person who was most instrumental for the annual *Coin World* book edition, in a roundabout way, was John J. Ford. In 1952 Ford gave a talk at a Baltimore Coin Club meeting on numismatic literature. I sat in the front row and made copious notes of his talk. He remembered that and we had later conversations on building numismatic libraries.

A year or two later at a New Haven coin show he asked if I would like to accompany him to visit book dealer W.C. Saunders. We spent the evening in Saunders' basement perusing the largest numismatic book stock in America at the time.

Later Ford acquired rights to the *Standard Catalog* from the Wayte Raymond estate and asked me if I would like to compile a section on numismatic books for a new edition of this book. I agreed and grouped English language numismatic books in related topics and listed these in tabular form. Ford rejected this format and returned my manuscript.

In 1960, after I had been named founding editor of *Coin World*, I created a number of special editions (e.g. Civil War). I dusted off this book list manuscript and ran this as the first edition of the special book edition. At about this same time I visited Frank J. Katen at his home, then in Washington DC.

Katen showed me his card file on numismatic books and I casually mentioned that this would be useful in future editions.¹

Next year, when I left *Coin World*, Katen and the newspaper got together and he agreed to update the annual book listing. He kept my same topical listing. Forty years later the book list still persists in roughly the same topical groupings of that original listing.

As for Frank, I'll remember him for his quick wit and love of numismatic books. Over the years I bought many from him and still find his sticker inside the front cover of an occasional book: "From the Katen Numismatic Library" (meaning: from his stock of books for sale!).

¹Months later Katen and his first wife had a messy divorce and I got a call from the wife to see if I wanted to "buy that card file." No thank you. Later Frank found my phone number on his telephone bill and wanted to know what had transpired. I told him.

The Printer's Devil: Dr. James Mease: A Forgotten Pioneer of Numismatic Literature By Joel J. Orosz

Dr. James Mease (1771-1846) hit a grand slam of "firsts" in numismatic writing. The good doctor's pen produced the earliest known U.S. publications on the subjects of the United States Mint (1811), medals (1821), and coins (1838), as well as the first article on a numismatic subject to be reprinted (1834) in this country. One might think that, given this extraordinary record, Dr. Mease would therefore occupy the most prominent spot in the American numismatic bibliophile's pantheon. One might think so, but if so, one would be wrong. In fact, few 21st century numismatic bibliophiles have even heard of Dr. James Mease, and fewer still have ever held in their hands or read his history-making numismatic writings. Obscurity was not always his lot; during his lifetime, Dr. Mease was well known, not only as a physician, but also as a geologist, historian, social reformer, author, and yes, even as a numismatist. It is time to draw back the curtain of oblivion that has obscured James Mease's name, and at last give him his biblio-numismatic due.

Before delving into Mease's remarkable numismatic career, however, some acknowledgements are in order. As your columnist noted in this space in

the Spring, 2001 issue of *The Asylum*, the first author to mention the numismatic significance of Dr. James Mease's writings was Frederick S.W. Mayers, in his article "The literature of American numismatics," published in *Norton's Literary Letter* No. 3 (1859), that was adapted from a presentation he had given to the American Numismatic Society on November 19, 1858. Mayers described the articles Mease wrote that qualified as the earliest known publications in the U.S. about medals, about coins, and the earliest known reprint of a numismatic article. Since Mayers' essay was printed in an obscure and soon-to-be defunct journal, it was quickly forgotten.

Howard Adelson was the first to call attention to the fact that Mayers had delivered his paper (see *The American Numismatic Society, 1858-1958*, p. 27), but he could find no evidence that it had ever been published. The publication was rediscovered by George F. Kolbe, who sold a copy of the pertinent number of *Norton's Literary Letter* in his sale No. 8, on December 19, 1980, lot 1136. Kolbe, however, did not make the connection between the Mayers article and the paper read before the ANS until his sale No. 50 on December 9, 1991,

when he offered another copy of *Norton's Literary Letter* No. 3 as lot 450 (the author is indebted to Alan Luedeking for supplying this information). Eric P. Newman then reintroduced modern numismatists to the Mayers piece and gave a detailed description of Mease's groundbreaking publications, in his article, "Earliest American Numismatic Articles," published in *The Numismatist* for August, 1992. Finally, your columnist reveals here the numismatic contents of the various editions of Mease's *The Picture of Philadelphia*, including its earliest-known description of the United States Mint.

James Mease was born on August 11, 1771, to John Mease (a wealthy shipping merchant) and Esther (Miller) Mease of Philadelphia. Young James earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1787, and took his M.D. from the same institution in 1792. He had the enormous good fortune of securing as his preceptor Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813), Philadelphia's leading physician, a noted social reformer and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Only a few months after they began to work together, Doctors Rush and Mease suddenly were confronted by a plague of biblical proportions: the lethal Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic of 1793. No one in 1793 understood what caused the fever, but everyone knew that it could convert a healthy adult into a putrid corpse within a

matter of hours. Panic gripped the city, which was then the capital of the infant United States. Civil society collapsed; the federal government, including the mint, literally shut down. Philadelphia's municipal administration did manage to limp along, largely due to its courageous mayor, Matthew Clarkson (another pioneering numismatist, who eight years previously had bought at the earliest known auction in the United States featuring coins, the numismatic collection of Pierre Eugène Du Simitière). Clarkson was able to mobilize the Free African Society and a small committee of white volunteers, and together these stalwarts tended to the ill, buried the dead, and held total anarchy at bay.

As the fever felled hundreds, thousands more fled for the countryside, including much of Philadelphia's medical community. Doctors Rush and Mease, to their enduring credit, were among those who stayed and treated the hordes of victims. For weeks, they saw as many as 100 patients daily, were felled themselves by the fever, and somehow rose again to confront the crisis. It was, on their parts, nothing short of heroic – and nothing short of disastrous for their patients. Rush championed drastic methods to cure fever victims: copious bleedings and massive purges using enough mercury to blacken the teeth. Under Rush's care, Mease survived the loss of more than ten pounds of blood during his bouts with the fever, about 83% of the total

weight of blood in his body (see John H. Powell, *Bring Out Your Dead*, p. 125). Rush's strenuous methods, while not entirely out of the mainstream of medical practice of the day, undoubtedly proved the last straw for many debilitated fever victims. Ironically, Rush and Mease, in their principled and courageous service, inadvertently killed dozens of sufferers who might have recovered if simply left alone.

Dr. Mease continued to practice the healing arts for several years after the plague of '93 (he served for nine months as a surgeon during the war of 1812), but eventually gave up his medical practice for a life of wide-ranging scholarship. His published works ran the gamut from general knowledge (he edited the *Domestic Encyclopedia*, [1803-1804] and the *Archives of Useful Knowledge* [1811-1812]); to the earth sciences (his *Geological Account of the United States*, published in 1807, was one of the first treatises on this subject by an American); to local history (his *The Picture of Philadelphia*, the first edition of which appeared in 1811, is the work for which Mease is best remembered). This is the book that deserves to be recalled as well by numismatic bibliophiles as the first to give a detailed description of the workings of the United States Mint. The balance of this column will be dedicated to an examination of the contents of all three of its editions in some detail.

Both the title and the contents

of *The Picture of Philadelphia* were inspired by a book written by another celebrated physician, Samuel Latham Mitchill, in 1807. Mitchill's tome, *The Picture of New-York; or The Traveller's Guide, Through the Commercial Metropolis of the United States* served as a sort of guidebook to New York City, describing its commercial and social institutions. It was a 223-page volume without illustrations, but so informative that, according to the catalogue of the Streeter Collection, Washington Irving used it as a model for writing his satirical *Knickerbocker History*. Mease clearly wanted to do for Philadelphia what Mitchill had done for New York City, and used Mitchill's book as his model when writing *The Picture of Philadelphia*.

The full title of Mease's book tells us much about the author's aims: *The Picture of Philadelphia; Giving an Account of its Origin, Increase, and Improvements in Arts, Sciences, Manufactures, Commerce, and Revenue. With a Compendious View of its Societies, Literary, Benevolent, Patriotic & Religious. Its Police – The Public Buildings – The Prison and Penitentiary System – Institutions, Monied and Civil – Museum*. Mease was aiming to present a complete view of the life of a great city, taking into account all three of its sectors: public, private and social. And he included a literal view of the city in the form of an engraving depicting the Philadelphia waterfront and "skyline" viewed from the vantage point of Kensington.

Anticipating Hugh Hefner by more than a century (in terms of technique, if not in content), the frontispiece engraving was bound into the book in a "fold-out" format.

The Picture of Philadelphia contained much of numismatic interest. For example, on pp. 311-314, Mease minutely described the Philadelphia Museum of Charles Willson Peale, the painter and museologist extraordinaire of the early republic. Peale's son, Franklin, is remembered as the notorious Chief Coiner of the United States Mint, who turned that institution, in Don Taxay's memorable phrase, into a "workshop for his own gain."

The elder Peale, whose museum embraced history, fine arts, natural history and science, exhibited his greatest treasures in the main gallery, or "Long Room." It was here, according to Mease, that the numismatic artifacts were on display: "At the East end are several medals, some struck by congress, and some by order of Joseph Sansom, esq. commemorating events of the American Revolution." These pieces no doubt included a number of what we today call U.S. Mint medals struck to commemorate the heroes of the War of Independence and the War of 1812, as well as some pieces that we now call Betts medals.

Joseph Sansom, a Philadelphia merchant and contemporary of Dr. Mease, published (beginning in 1805), a series of well-designed medals, with dies cut by John Reich, honoring George

Washington (Baker 54, 57, 58 and 71) and Benjamin Franklin (Betts 546). Sansom's "Medalic History of the American Revolution" series would indeed have made for a handsome exhibit.

The Picture of Philadelphia was influential in its time as a means of promoting what today goes by the name of historic preservation. By celebrating Philadelphia's buildings, and sharing the history that made them distinctive, Mease earned the title of "The First American Antiquarian." A number of these edifices had a numismatic connection, such as the city's major financial institutions, the Bank of the United States, the Bank of North America, the Bank of Pennsylvania, the Bank of Philadelphia, and the Farmer's and Mechanic's Bank. He described their operations on pp. 105-108, and their buildings on pp. 320-324.

One of the Philadelphia buildings that Mease celebrated was the United States Mint. On pages 154 through 158, for the first time in any publication, he gave an extensive and thoughtful description of its operations. The author began by describing the competing and confusing monetary systems that operated in colonial America, and the provisions of the coinage acts of 1786 (enacted by the Congress of the Confederation) and 1792 (enacted by the United States Congress). In explicating the latter, the good doctor used more than a page to describe the weights, the finenesses and devices of all U.S. copper, silver and gold coins

current in 1811. He continued his statistical accounting by sharing the total value of gold (\$2,763,597.50), silver (\$4,370,846.50), and copper (\$214,977.21) coined from 1792 through 1809. Mease noted that "Of the gold coins, the value of \$27,000 is the produce [*sic*] of North Carolina." All of these coins had been struck at a reasonable overhead, for Mease reckoned the annual expenditures of the Mint at "about \$20,000." He closed out the statistical portion of his account by naming the officers of the Mint (interestingly, the treasurer was his old preceptor, Dr. Benjamin Rush).

The Assay Commission did not escape Mease's notice, for he explained that on the second Monday in February, "The commissioner of coins, the district judge, and the attorney-general are required, by law, to attend at the Mint for the purpose of having coins assayed..." Mease went on to relate that coins are reserved for assay in order to assure that they are in compliance with the standard fixed by law.

The most interesting portions of Mease's section on the United States Mint presented his own views and opinions. While he admitted that "great difficulties and embarrassments" were experienced by the early Mint, he judged that "time has overcome them all, and it is understood that, in some respects the process of striking is more complete than in most other countries England excepted."

With this statement, Mease proved himself a master of spin before the term was invented. If read carefully, his statement asserts that our mint strikes coins better in some ways than most countries, except England, which is better.

A much less ambiguous statement followed, however, when he asserted that "The beauty of the coins of the United States, is not inferior to that of any country in the world. There is a sharpness and cleanness of cut not perceptible in those of either France or Spain."

A final intriguing claim from Mease's pen was that "The mode of hardening the dies is peculiar to the Mint, and is the discovery of the present assistant coiner, Mr. Eckfeldt." This suggests a close acquaintance between the author and Adam Eckfeldt, but Mease offers no corroborating evidence about the process, how Eckfeldt invented it, or how Mease learned of it.

Mease's essay on the mint proved a more than satisfactory first attempt to write about this institution. Others would follow, of course, and in greater detail, but it was Mease who led the way. His inclusion of the mint in *The Picture of Philadelphia* affirmed that this once-struggling organization now had found its sea legs and was walking steadily toward usefulness.

The 1811 first edition of *The Picture of Philadelphia* is an octavo volume of 376 pages, which sold well, and found much use as a traveler's guide and a reference source for business people

and consumers alike. Consequently, today it is scarce, but hardly rare. Any bibliophile making a determined search should be able to find a copy (although the quarry becomes more elusive if one seeks an example in (or even close to) its original state, or an example inscribed by the author). There is also an extremely rare 358-page variant of the first edition; it is not clear which version in fact constitutes the first printing.

The Picture of Philadelphia sold well enough to eventually exhaust the first edition, and to create demand for another. This second edition appeared in 1824, suitably retitled *Picture of Philadelphia for 1824, Containing the Picture of Philadelphia for 1811, With All Its Improvements Since That Period*. Your columnist has been unable to locate a copy of the second edition for examination; in our opinion it is second only to the 358-page variant of the first edition in terms of rarity among the various "Pictures." The second edition did improve upon the first in one key respect, in that it is recorded as containing three plates, as compared to only one for the first edition.

The second edition triggered a critical response from one J.N. Barker, who called into question some of the historical facts published within. Mease reacted, in 1828, by publishing a pamphlet titled *A Reply to the Criticisms by J.N. Barker on the Historical Facts in The Picture of Philadelphia*. This 18-page piece refutes Barker's points one by one, carefully cit-

ing Mease's authority for each of the facts in dispute. The *Reply* has no numismatic content, and while scarce, cannot be described as rare.

The second edition, as it happened, was not the last the public was to see of *The Picture of Philadelphia*. In 1831, there appeared not a third edition exactly, but something more like a reprint and a revision rolled into one. It came out in two volumes (although many sets were subsequently rebound into a single volume by their owners). The first volume is simply a verbatim reprint of Mease's 1811 edition. The second, or update volume, was authored by one Thomas Porter, and is essentially a history of Philadelphia from 1811 to 1831. The section on the U.S. Mint in the first volume is reprinted verbatim from the 1811 first edition, and Porter did not revise the section in his update volume.

The 1831 volumes are usually found extensively illustrated; besides the fold-out frontispiece, there are, depending upon the copy, 29, 32, or 34 inserted woodcut and lithographic plates. One of the plates, that depicting the Bank of the United States, is of numismatic interest. All copies of the "third edition" seen by your columnist have been bound as a single volume, rather than two volumes bound separately. It is rarer than the first edition, indicating that it probably failed to sell as well as the original, but more common than the second edition, and the variant first edition.

So, three and a half decades before William Dubois wrote about the United States Mint in *Pledges of History*, Dr. James Mease became the first to write a detailed account of the mint and its workings. True, he penned this piece for general audiences instead of numismatists, but this fact does nothing to diminish its pioneering position. Moreover, Dr. Mease knew whereof he

wrote, both in terms of his first-hand knowledge of the subject and his first-hand acquaintance with Mint officers. This achievement, significant though it was, proved only the beginning of Mease's parade of numismatic "firsts." Next time I shall focus on the inaugural article about medals published in the United States, a production of the forgotten pioneer's pen in 1821.

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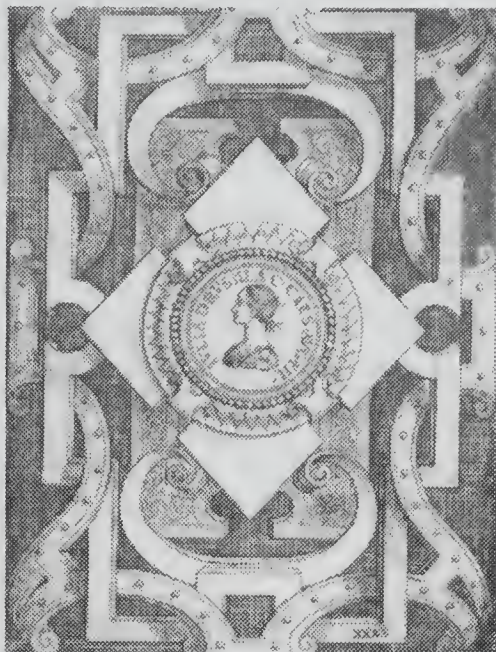
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Numismatics in the Age of Grolier

An Exhibit at the Grolier Club Through 17 November 2001

Numismatic literature was among the most elegant and fascinating expressions of the printer's art during the European Renaissance. A wide selection of these works, as well as Renaissance medals and the Greek and Roman coins which inspired them, will be on view at the Grolier through Nov. 17, 2001.

The sixteenth century heralded a "Golden Age of Numismatics," when collection and study of ancient coins was a must for any serious Renaissance artist or humanist. More than archaeological remains, ancient coins (and books about them) provided the best means of diffusing images from antiquity throughout Europe, to scholars and collectors hungry for such knowledge. In fact, Jean Grolier, the famous French book collector for whom the Club is named, was recognized by contemporaries for his collection of ancient coins as well as for his numismatic books.



Among the highlights are many firsts:

- The first numismatic book – the 1514 Paris edition of Budé's *De asse et partibus*, published by Josse Bude.
- Andrea Fulvio's *Illustrium imagines* (Rome, 1517), the first illustrated numismatic book in its possibly unique first issue.
- An unfinished 1565 manuscript of Enea Vico will be displayed for the first time, along with all his published works. Vico is generally considered the first scientific numismatist.
- Grolier's copy of Vico's first book, *Le imagini*, published in 1548.
- Grolier's leather bound coin trays from the Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine in Carpentras will be on view for the first time in America along with cases belonging to Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc from the same collection

Among the other extraordinary examples of numismatic literature are Hubertus Goltzius's chiaroscuro portrait book, *Les images presque de tous les empereurs depuis C. Julius Caesar iusques a Charles V* (Antwerp, 1559), and his privately printed survey of ancient numismatics printed in Bruges, 1563-1579, represented by association copies from his patron, Marcus Laurinus. Jacopo Strada, a major sixteenth century numismatic figure immortalized by Titian, will be represented by the work he published himself, together with

Thomas Guerin and Jean de Tournes, in Lyon in 1553. Among Strada's works on display will be the Gessner elephant folio edition of 1559, one of the most remarkable examples of his printing. The show includes much other work published in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands.

During the Golden Age, numismatics and printing intersected, not only between the covers but also on the covers. Coins, medals or images thereof appear prominently on several bindings of the period. On exhibit, for example, will be a French binding inspired by a medal of Henry II, and a 1523 Paduan binding with a medallion head of Alexander the Great impressed on a "grid" pattern, reminiscent of a drawer in a collector's coin cabinet.

Numismatics in the Age of Grolier will be curated by Professor John Cunnally of Iowa State University, the author of *Images of the Illustrious: The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1999), and Grolier Club member Jonathan H. Kagan. The display of Renaissance medals will be selected and guest-curated by Dr. Stephen K. Scher, author of *Currency of Fame; Portrait Medals of the Renaissance* (New York, 1994).

This spectacular exhibition will be on view at The Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, New York, New York. It is open to the public without charge, Monday – Saturday, 10 am - 5 pm, through Nov. 17, 2001.

Editor's Note: As this issue went to press the tragic events September 11 were unfolding. The opening of this exhibition has been delayed please contact the Grolier Club at 212-838-6690 or www.grolierclub.org for more up to date information.

SYMPOSIUM

*Co-sponsored by the American Numismatic Society
to be held in conjunction with the Grolier Club exhibition
Numismatics in the Age of Grolier
October 27, 2001, 10 am – 3 pm
at the Grolier Club*

Speakers will include:

Professor John Cunnally, co-curator of the exhibition and author of *Images of the Illustrious, the Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1999).

Dr. C.E. Dekesel, author of monographs on Hubert Goltzius and Charles Patin and the new standard bibliography of 16th century numismatic books, *Bibliotheca Nummaria* (Crestline, 1997).

Jean-Baptiste Giard, Conservateur Émerité of the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), author of the catalogues of the Roman coins in the Bibliothèque nationale and of the mint of Lyons, as well as numerous articles on the history of numismatics.

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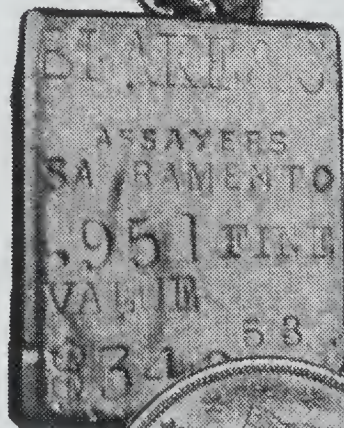
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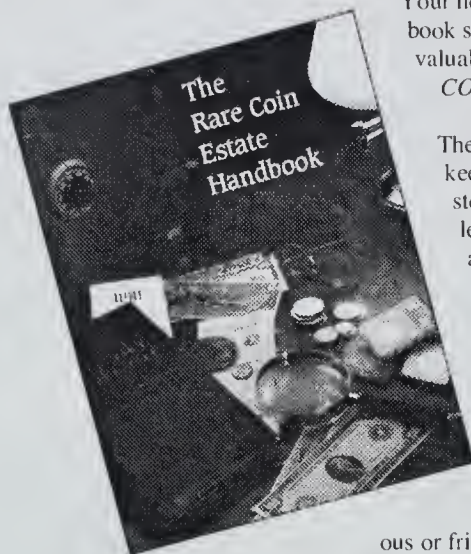
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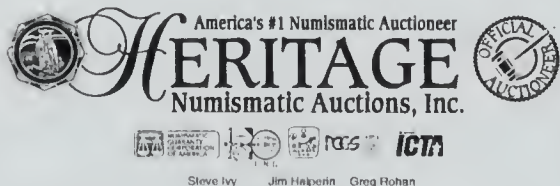
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